

LAST DAYS

MAGAZINE

THE

VOL. 15.4 '92

THE POWER OF THE CROSS
by Noel Alexander

Finding God When You've Failed
by Jack Hayford

LDM Touching The World

Three upcoming schools

LAST DAYS

MAGAZINE

22 Finding God When You've Failed

by Jack Hayford

Sin is indeed a barrier to relating with God, but failing doesn't mean we are disqualified from approaching Him. Forgiveness is abundant when we're honest before the throne.

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Last Days Ministries

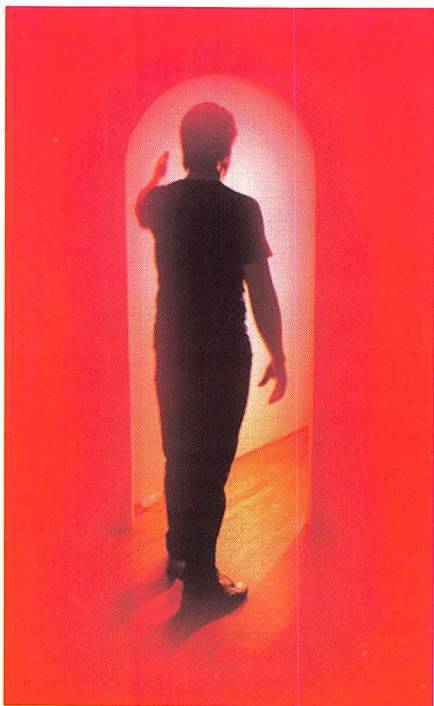
Taking God's love to a hurting world in creative and powerful ways – and training others to do the same.

Last Days Ministries is a community of believers committed to Jesus Christ and each other. Our greatest desire is to serve the Lord with all our hearts, as individuals and together as a ministry.

Our hearts burn with a passion to reach the lost across the globe with God's love – and to challenge Christians everywhere to a radical faith in Jesus!

LDMers come in all sizes, shapes, and colors – from many nations and different church backgrounds. But we have one thing in common: our commitment to send out God's truth in fresh, contemporary ways through the written word, the spoken word, or song – and by sending out ourselves as well!

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Brian Swegle



6 LDM Touching The World

From the jungles of Brazil to Lindale, Texas, God continues to use ordinary people for His glory.

12 The Power Of The Cross

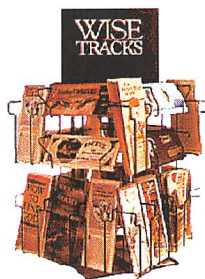
by Noel Alexander

The cross of Christ is not only a step in the plan of salvation. It can and should radically transform the daily lives of God's people.



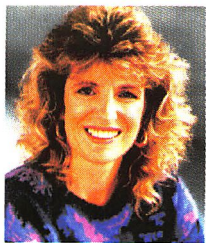
29 Ministry Stuff

A back-to-basics sampling of our favorite materials. Read, listen, and learn – even send some to a friend!



Are you searching?

If you want to know more about what it means to be a Christian, we have some information we'd like to send you. There is no charge or obligation. Just write to Last Days Ministries and ask for the free Packet, "Walking with Jesus."



The Humility Of Christmas

In this Christmas season I am once again marveling at the miraculous birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Have you ever considered the incredible humility of Jesus?

The Father's plan of delivering His only Son to earth never ceases to amaze me. What an awesome event! A child created by God placed in the womb of a young virgin. How could something so impossible – be possible?

Jesus deserved to be born in the finest palace of the day. Instead, His official welcoming committee was an assortment of barn animals.

Since earthly kings have such a flair for grand entrances, who would think the King of the Universe would consent to such a humble beginning? But He did.

The humility of Jesus Christ marked His life and ministry from His very first day on earth.

And what a day it was!

It was a day that forever changed the course of human history.

Wouldn't you have loved to have been one of the shepherds on that starry night? Can you imagine seeing an angel suddenly appear in the night sky to proclaim, *"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord: And this shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."*

And since one angel wasn't enough to declare the birth of the Savior of all mankind, a multitude of angelic beings lit up the desolate sky to declare their praises to God.

When the angels left, the shepherds

didn't say, "Hey, let's go downtown to see if this *really* happened." To the contrary!

They said, *"Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us."* Then they rushed into town to eagerly seek their Messiah.

The key to identifying Him wasn't that He was wrapped in swaddling clothes – that was customary. The sign was His mark of humility. Instead of being in a home as newborns normally are, the shepherds found Jesus in a barn just as the angels said.

God chose simple nomads – pious men with no wealth or social status – to be among the first to behold His Son. What incredible, unspeakable joy they must have felt in that holy moment as they gazed into their Savior's face.

Once they returned to their flock, the shepherds began telling everyone, everywhere they went, all they'd seen and heard. They *"...made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child."*

They were the world's first evangelists and their primary message wasn't about what it was like to see myriads of angels create a heavenly light show in the sky. They talked about what the angels said *about Jesus* – that the Savior of all mankind had arrived.

Can you imagine them telling their Jewish friends that the magnificent Messiah they'd been waiting for had come – but not boldly on a white horse with heavenly pageantry. Instead He was a vulnerable baby, born to a virgin teenager!

As a poet once said:

*They were looking for a king
To bring salvation nigh
He came a little infant thing
That made a woman cry*

But these itinerant preachers shared the Good News without shrinking back.

They didn't care if they looked foolish. They were already reflecting the image of their Savior.

Humility.

Of course not everyone believed. The elite were probably offended that some rugged shepherds (an occupation considered somewhat shady in those days) thought they could tell them anything. It took humility to believe a Child could be sent from heaven to save us from our sins and reconcile us to God.

It took humility then. It takes humility now.

It takes willing messengers, too.

This Christmas my prayer is that Jesus Christ will be born in our hearts in a fresh and powerful way – and that our passion for Him will overflow our own life and ignite the hearts of those around us.

May we, like those early shepherds, have the courage to boldly proclaim

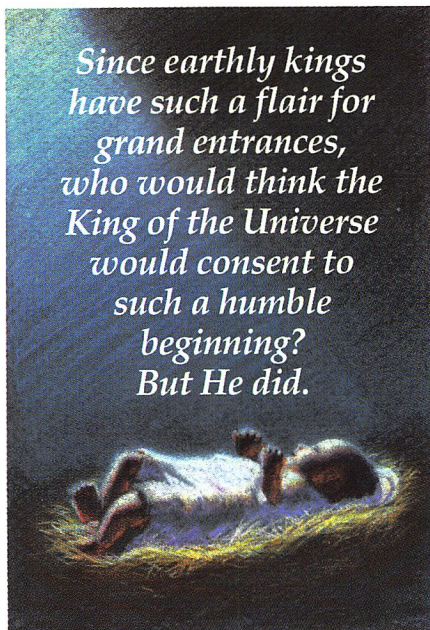
what we know is true. We must not be ashamed to crown Jesus King of Kings and Lord of Lords for all the world to see. May we not wilt in the face of ever-increasing mockery – even by the most elite. And may we understand that we, like those first shepherds, are God's chosen messengers to the earth today.

The Christmas season is a natural time for us to reach out to others. As unbelievers try to enter into the "spirit of Christmas," they adopt greater attitudes of giving, openness, and goodwill. This gives us opportunities to share our faith that aren't normally there.

In fact, during this season many people become acutely aware of their lack of connectedness to family and friends – and their feelings of loneliness or depression intensify. Sadly, more people commit suicide around Christmas than at any other time of the year.

Like the shepherds, you have seen Jesus. You have witnessed His birth in your heart. This is what your family, friends, and fellow workers need to

hear. This is why Jesus came. Use this occasion to share Christ with someone who doesn't know Him. Make a phone call, write a letter, take someone to lunch. Tell them the "spirit of Christmas" doesn't have to disappear on December 26th, but can be carried in their heart all year long. Introduce them to the Prince of Peace, who can give them a peace on earth that cannot be taken away.



Jesus, in an effort to reach those who needed to hear, was the perfect example of humility in every area. May we too, in humility, forget ourselves enough to be His messengers to those who need Him.

What greater Christmas gift could there be?

Melody

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LDM TOUCHING THE WORLD

LDM Outreach In Brazil

by Ingrid Brunkhorst-Hurrell

Chugging along in a weather-beaten riverboat, the LDM Outreach Team was filled with anticipation. The Amazon was deceptively serene, yet somewhere in the murky waters, piranhas and alligators were lurking. "Bet-El," or "House of God," was an apt name for a boat traveling through the enemy's territory!



On board the Bet-El.

It was God's love for Brazil that had brought our Outreach Team to minister in two separate teams in two different areas.

Manaus outreach

Manaus, meaning "City Of The Gods," is filled with the darkness and misery of the "gods" served there. Spiritists shuffle and chant around fires they burn to "please the spirits." Every

Friday, spiritualistic rituals and chicken or dog sacrifices are performed at busy intersections.

"It was bizarre – the whole area was littered with chicken bones and candles, but we felt God's peace in the midst of all this," team leader Jim Orr said.

The Manaus Team first ministered at a "Sing-along for Jesus" evening organized by three local churches at the city square. About 1,500 people watched the drama "Zion" and gave the LDMers a standing ovation. One man who was deeply involved in drugs had decided before coming that night to take his own life. At the end of the evening he committed his life to Christ.

Warfare in the city

Walking the streets and praying at strategic places like the mayor's office and the health department, the team declared all-out war against the forces of darkness. When they worshiped the Lord at the intersection where the spiritists usually perform, they sensed God's pleasure. Where God had been cursed, His people were lifting their hearts in worship.

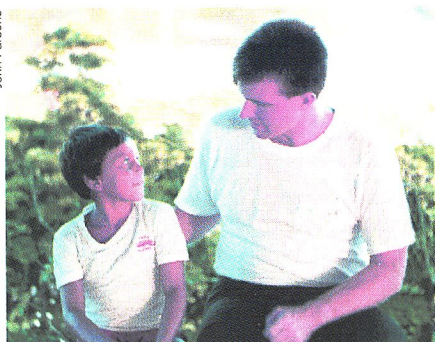
Practical blessing

Ministering through evangelistic dramas, intercession, preaching, and counseling wasn't all the team did. The YWAM base in Brazil had a pressing problem – a water well with no pump. Drinking water had to be hauled from a neighbor a quarter of a mile away.

LDM donated a water pump to the YWAM base, and LDMer Brian Swegle installed it. "They've been trying for five years to get this done, but never had anyone who could do it," Brian



John Parsons



Sometimes touching the world simply means listening to and loving one child.

said. He also helped design a future water system.

Amazon's river people

While going upriver to Novo Airao, the propeller on the team's boat broke. This gave the team an unexpected opportunity to minister in the village where they had to wait for parts. Their ministry and worship in a local public school inspired the principal so much that she decided to invite local ministers to the school on a weekly basis for worship.

Belem outreach

Belem, the second outreach location, is located at the mouth of the Amazon River and has 500,000 inhabitants. The spiritual oppression over the city is very evident in the immorality seen there. Prostitutes and transvestites openly roam the streets and beaches because prostitution is legal in Brazil. Pornography is openly displayed and advertised. Street kids grow up accustomed to a perverted lifestyle and form gangs that are often involved in violent crimes such as gang rape. Many

bear scars on their small, malnourished bodies as evidence of their lifestyles. The main thrust of this LDM Outreach Team was evangelism through mercy ministries, such as working with the street kids or on a hospital boat called *The Samaritan* that ministers to the tribes living on the banks of the Amazon. On the boat, LDMers assisted the dental and health care workers and even helped deliver a baby! They also did house-to-house evangelism in the villages along the river.

Sewer pipe kids

One heartbreaking encounter was meeting some of the street kids who live under bridges where the city sewer pipes are located. Team leader Mark Payne said, "My heart was really broken for them – to see them living in conditions like this... kids nine or ten years old, living and sleeping in their own urine, sniffing glue, just dirty with sores all over them." Everyone on the team was filled with compassion for the children they ministered to.

Beach drama

Working alongside the full-time staff of YWAM Belem, the LDMers had a



Brian Sweigle

Annette Lamb ministers to needy kids.

firsthand experience in beach evangelism. "The only way I can describe it is being close to the gates of hell. People were on vacation and went to the beach and just partied. There were people drinking... drugs, and nudity," Mark Payne said.

The team performed a drama, and when they came to a scene that depicted alcoholism, the beach crowd cheered and whistled. During the crucifixion scene, however, many who had been cheering began to weep. Between 50 and 100 people responded to the altar call and gave their hearts to the Lord!

LDM's Ten Days Ablaze

by Jeanne' Piraino Sigler

This summer, singles and families alike, ages 19 to 40, traveled across America to LDM's Ten Days Ablaze. The first six days were filled with powerful, life-changing teachings that prepared the Ablazers for their four-day outreach. Many wonderful things happened during those ten days. We'd like to share a few highlights from the outreach.

Filling two minibusses to full capacity, the Ablazers headed for Dallas and their inner city outreach. The team

joined forces with a local storefront church. Several dozen Christians put on their walking shoes, armed themselves with LDM tracts in English and Spanish, and trekked for several miles on a well-charted course carrying a 12-foot wooden cross.

Hauling this huge, heavy cross through the inner-city neighborhood was a quiet but mighty statement of faith. It ignited a new boldness in the team members that they carried home in their hearts: a courage and fortitude that will bear fruit for years to come.

Ablazer Georgia Wheeler from Indiana said, "Everyone was watching us, wondering what was going on... I stopped to speak to a Hispanic girl. It seemed as if the Lord gave me all the words to say. A seed was planted that day... My heart was leaping and saying *I want this! This is it. I want the lost to be saved! I want them to know Jesus, the Good News! They gotta hear! They gotta be touched like He touched me!*"

One afternoon, the Ablazers saw the power of public praise and worship when it's taken to the streets. An old building in a run-down part of town had been donated to Youth With A Mission, Dallas, and our team gathered with them to dedicate it to the Lord. As



Hauling the 12-foot cross was a quiet but mighty statement of faith for these Ablazers.

they began to worship, the power of God fell and neighbors began coming out of their homes in curiosity, sitting on their front porches to listen.

Anna Rogers, a single mom from Arizona, disappeared as the group was singing. Later, at the bottom of the rickety stairway, they discovered her with a group of neighborhood children. The worship drew people in from all over the street, but the children were brave enough to sneak over and ask what was going on. Then something extraordinary happened. As Anna led them in prayer, five little children gave their hearts to the Lord. Everyone there rejoiced as Anna's love for Jesus set five little hearts ablaze that Saturday afternoon.

LDMers Link With The National Life Chain

by Jeanne' Piraino Sigler

Horns honked and arms waved in approval as passing motorists read miles of bright blue and white signs. While nearly a million people across America participated in this year's Life Chain, LDMers joined over 1,000 pro-life supporters right here in Lindale, Texas.

The Life Chain made a peaceful yet powerful statement. Busy intersections were lined with Pro-Lifers going out in four directions to form a cross. In their hands were signs reading *Abortion Kills Children*.

LDM Council Member Jon Alder, who was one of the Lindale Life Chain organizers, said, "Last Days Ministries is an international ministry, but we're not going to forget what's happening in our own backyard. It was a real pleasure to serve the local church this way."

Pastor Kent Fowler of the First Assembly of God Church of Lindale said, "Abortion is not only murder, but it's murder at the highest levels of injustice towards defenseless, innocent children."



Christians speaking out for life.

As over 1,000 Christians in Lindale took their places, they covered over four miles of busy intersection. Eleven local churches and four missionary organizations participated, making it a unified effort to stop the baby-killing. Among the participants was local resident Matthew Ward, a singer / songwriter and former member of Second Chapter of Acts. Matthew said, "We are speaking out today to make people aware that America is murdering children."

Kim Geiger, who has been at LDM for ten years, participated with his three-year-old son David. "I'm here today with my adopted son because I believe in adoption, not abortion," he said.

Although the protest was a silent one, the objective was loud and clear. With *Americans Against Abortion* as the pro-life arm of Last Days Ministries, it was only fitting that we take part in the Life Chain.



Little ones to Him belong.

Want to get involved? Please write to: Life Chain,
1801 Simpson Way, Bakersfield, CA 93307



Let's talk about love

It was a simple thing for Chris to kneel down and share God's love with a couple of Brazilian children – the hard part was getting him there. It wouldn't have happened without the gifts and prayers of our "World Changers" support team.

World Changers bought the vans that took Chris and his teammates to the airport. They bought the sound system the team used to present the Gospel to thousands. And they helped us teach Chris how to bring hope to a hurting world.

Your support really does matter. We're a non-profit organization staffed by full-time volunteers, so we need faithful friends who will lift us up prayerfully and financially. You might not be able to share the Gospel with the lost in Russia or lead homeless children to Jesus in the streets of Brazil... but you can help send us and our ministry materials there.

If you believe in the ministry of LDM, we invite you to become a *Last Days World Changer*. *World Changers* are the backbone of consistent, stable financial support for LDM. Their gifts of \$20 or more each month help keep us going!

Giving goes both ways

To say thanks, every other month *World Changers* receive a neat package stuffed with a little bit of our hearts. It includes:

- The *World Changer* Newsletter, full of pictures, stories, prayer and praise reports, and a special section Melody writes about her life and "at-home" experiences.

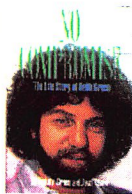


- **A Moment With Melody**, an audio cassette in which Melody shares personal reflections and a short Bible message.

- **A Gift** chosen to minister to you, including audio or video teachings, books, music or something else to help you grow.



Each new *World Changer* will receive a soft-cover copy of Melody's book, *No Compromise. The Life Story of Keith Green*, and three one-year *Last Days Magazine* gift subscription certificates to give to friends. And those who send a full year's gift all at once will also receive a hardcover copy of *No Compromise* – personally signed by Melody for them or a friend.



If you'd like to become a *World Changer*, please fill out the *World Changer* section on our order form, return it with your gift of \$20 or more, and we'll begin sending you your gifts right away.



I believe reaching the world is a team effort, so I'd like to invite you to join with us at Last Days as we work to fulfill the Great Commission.

Melody



WORLD CHANGER

IN THE HANDS OF THE MASTER POTTER

The article on anointing was read at our prayer group as a teaching, and after the woman finished it there was silence for five minutes. Each of us was deep in thought as to how it was meant for us.... There was just too much in there to grasp in the little time we had. In fact, it was hard to continue the meeting. More time has to be spent reading and meditating on that article to absorb the entire message God has for each individual child of God. On behalf of all of us at the special meeting, I thank you.

Bernice Bissonnette, Connecticut

I love the article by sister Jill Austin on "In The Hands Of The Master Potter." It was a great blessing to me spiritually, for I am, so to say, on the shelf here in jail. Every day I pray for God's grace to help me through another day, and for His perfect will to be done in my life. God bless you all at Last Days.

John Bertsch, California

The article on the "Potter" last month was tremendous. What an encouragement to all who are willing to let the Lord take them through the higher fires. With the soft message most churches are preaching these days, I really appreciate all the encouragement I can get. Thanks again!

Mrs. Michael Teno, Florida

NO COMPROMISE AUDIO BOOK

I want to thank you for putting *No Compromise. The Life Story Of Keith Green* on audio cassette tapes. My sister was born with an eye disease that will eventually lead to blindness. Presently, what little vision remains in her right eye is becoming less and less functional. Now that Keith's life story is on tape, I'll be able to give that to her to "read." I want you to know that making *No Compromise* available on audio cassette

has been an answer to months of prayer for me!

Kathy Schulz, Illinois

NO COMPROMISE BOOK

I just finished your book *No Compromise*. Some friends recommended it. It was exactly what I needed. I cried more reading this book than during any other event in my life so far. It was a deep cleansing the Holy Spirit has started.

Brad Dugan, Texas

P.S. Enclosed is ten dollars for sending me "So You Wanna Go Back To Egypt" free ten years ago.

RADICAL HOPE

Wow! Am I blown away or what? A member of our worship team read to us out of a recent issue of your magazine – the article on hope. Let me tell you, it shut us down!

*Randy Stewart
Elim Christian Fellowship, Maine*

APPREHENSIONS PUT ON HOLD

Enclosed you will find a tape that was recently featured on the Focus on the Family broadcast. It contains my abortion testimony. The week before the broadcast found me very apprehensive about telling the world of my abortion. I felt vulnerable and overworked and under attack from Satan.

On Wednesday I was put on hold at Sparrow Records and Keith's "Asleep In The Light" was playing. I popped in just as he sang, "God told you to speak but you keep holding it in / Oh, can't you see it's such sin." It was exactly what I needed to hear to confirm my mission was from God. It also alleviated the apprehensions in less than 30 seconds! I was able to go on and eagerly anticipate the broadcast.

Sydney A. Hawthorne-Masse, Colorado

OF

THE

THE

POWER

By Noel Alexander

Illustrations by Andrew Clarkson

CROSS

There is not a more liberating, redeeming, costly, significant, or glorious work in all of human history than the cross of Jesus Christ.

The sum total of that richness, and all God accomplished and made available to us in that act of grace, is known as the "power of the cross." That ongoing power is life-transforming and is working every second of every day.

Unfortunately, many Christians live in frustration and even defeat. To them the cross means their sins are forgiven and that's all. But what too few realize is that while making a way to forgive our sins, Jesus also dealt a death blow to our sinful natures by

giving us the power to live a life of victory each day by His Spirit.

Sadly, many Christians haven't applied the finished work of the cross to their lives. *"One died for all, therefore all died...wherefore if any man is in Christ he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are...new."*

(2 Cor. 2:15-17 KJV)

What can we do to live in the daily blessings and power of the things Jesus already won for us? How should we live in order to reap joy, happiness, and peace, now and through all eternity?

The answer is not a secret waiting to be discovered. It is found in Galatians 6:14. Paul states, *"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."*

Never has the Church been more in need of the message of the cross than today. Right in the midst of this massive technological age, with its scientific and communication breakthroughs, I

ER



believe those who have *true* wisdom are the Christians who, in simplicity, sow to the Spirit by glorying in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is a tremendous scripture in 1 Corinthians. It says, *“For the story and message of the cross is sheer absurdity and folly to those who are perishing and on their way to perdition, but to us who are being saved it is the manifestation of the power of God.”* (1:18 AMP)

If you want to see God in all His power, take a look at Jesus Christ dying on a cross. It’s at the cross that God in Christ conquered death, hell, and sin. And it’s there that He purchased for us all the glory, life, and freedom we could ever contain, and more! It’s already been done.

Jesus Christ paid the price for our sins so we don’t have to. He died on a cross and rose again to defeat the power of sin and death in the life of every person who believes.

God is serious about the cross. We need to be serious, too.

What is most important?

The Apostle Paul said, *“For what I received, I passed on to you as of **first importance**, that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.”* (1 Cor. 15:3 NIV) Here Paul elevates the death of Jesus on the cross to the very highest place. It is the most important event in all time and eternity. Dying on the cross was indeed the foremost goal of Jesus, for He said, *“I came to minister and to give my life as a ransom for many.”* (Mark 10:45 KJV)

Even John the Baptist, who was sent to bear witness to the Christ, exclaimed to his disciples upon seeing Jesus, *“Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.”* (John 1:29 NAS)

John knew that Jesus was the incarnate Word of God, the Author of life, and the greatest miracle-worker of all time. He could have commented on any of

these aspects. Yet the *most important thing* John wanted his disciples to know was that Jesus would pay the price necessary to open the way to God – through the cross.

And later in Jesus’ ministry He asked His own disciples, *“Who do you say I am?”* Peter answered, *“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”* (Matthew 16:15,16 NIV)

Peter not only knew Jesus was God’s Son, he knew His role as the Christ, or Redeemer. Peter didn’t realize *how* this redemption would happen, but Jesus wasted no time getting specific.

“From that time on Jesus began to explain to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that He must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.” (Matthew 16:21 NIV)

If you want to see God in all His power, take a look at Jesus Christ dying on a cross.

Jesus was basically saying, *“It’s gonna take the cross to redeem mankind.”*

Peter was so stunned that he began to reprove Jesus. *“God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to you.”* But Jesus turned and said, *“Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; for you are not setting your mind on God’s interests, but man’s.”* (Matthew 16:22,23 NAS)

The harshness of Jesus’ rebuke to Peter stems from His fierce realism about His primary purpose of coming to earth, which was to die. Peter did not realize the centrality of what would be accomplished by the cross – that it was of first importance.

To a large degree, this is the state of the Church today. We don’t fully understand Jesus’ mission to die on a cross or how to glory in it. Therefore, we can’t fully enter into the victory that the completion of that mission won for us.

The wisdom of the cross

Many people, even Christians, are embarrassed to embrace the simplicity of the cross as the door of entry into life with God.

Paul said, *“We preach Christ (the Messiah) crucified, [preaching which] to the Jews is a scandal and an offensive stumbling block and to Gentiles it is absurd and utterly unphilosophical nonsense.”* (1 Cor. 1:23 AMP)

Today the world still calls the central theme of Christianity foolishness. However, man’s inability to grasp the largeness of God’s truths makes them no less powerful.

Paul was determined not to let the cross be overshadowed by any other theme. *“For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel – not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.”* (1 Cor. 1:17 NIV)

May we resist anything that would allow the cross to be “emptied of its power” in our lives!

The stability of the cross

Spiritual power and stability come from really knowing what Christ accomplished for us on the cross. That’s where the tossing to and fro by every wind of doctrine is pushed away. The cross spells death to all things of lesser importance.

I’ve been a preacher for ten years and know the types of messages that get positive responses. I know for a fact that the teaching of the cross is not popular, even with Christians, because so much other stuff has been injected into the Body of Christ.

There are so many other messages and programs capturing our attention. But novelties will come and go. So will this or that emphasis. Christian leaders with their great visions will wax and wane. Yes, movements and men will rise and fall, but the cross will stand forever.

Are you looking for the newest

emphasis? I’ll tell you what it is. It happened 2000 years ago. It was Christ dying on the cross. The most glorious move of God on the face of the earth was when God openly and publicly displayed His Son as the sin offering for the world – and made a way for us to walk in His resurrection power.

The one message that is most important for you today, even as you’re reading



this right now, is the death of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross. All other things pale in the light of the face of the Crucified.

Separation from the world

What we need today is a clear separation from the world – separation from all of those things that drain away our life. The only thing that can make a *new creation* is the power of the cross.

The cross cuts off the umbilical cord that comes from the world to me and from me to the world. That umbilical cord (my attachment to the world and the world's attachment to me) is cut off, knotted, and dried up at the cross.

The cross was used by the Romans as a horrible and shameful instrument of death. Death on a cross was the greatest symbol of disgrace and was normally used only to execute slaves and the lower levels of society. Some of us might think that the only people who ever died on a cross were Jesus and the two thieves. However, there was a time when the Romans crucified men all the way from one city to the next, on either side of the road. Thousands were crucified for the name of the Lord.

Although the Romans used the cross daily at times, they themselves said, "Perish the thought that *any* Roman die on a cross."

We need to let the timeless power of Christ's cross work its death in us that we might live to God. May it be a permanent barrier between us and the world.

Keeping the cross in view

I believe that the Church is in some serious trouble today. Great movements are in trouble. Great men whom the body of Christ has looked to for many years are in trouble, having suddenly fallen into sin. For many of these men, I believe somewhere along the way the cross became obscured. Their prayer life began to fall by the wayside. Other things became more important and occupied their time. The light of the cross slowly dimmed and somehow that umbilical cord to the world attached itself again. And when they finally noticed, they cried out, "What on earth happened?"

As one great minister said, "It's easy to get consumed with the work of the Lord, and forget about the Lord of the work."

Being a zealous man myself, I have often pressed for the future. In the past I often yearned and hungered for the important things that were *to come*. But I know a lot more today. I found out that it all happened 2000 years ago.

*Suddenly Jesus Christ
in all of His glory hanging on
the center cross has become
emblazoned in my understanding.*

My preacher father, who is 97 years old, fostered a love in my heart for the hymns. One of my favorites is "When I Survey The Wondrous Cross" by Isaac Watts.

*When I survey the wondrous cross,
On which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.
Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ, my God...*

We need to survey the wondrous cross. By that I mean we must view it and consider it comprehensively.

I believe the Lord wants us to see the cross afresh by the revelation of the Holy Spirit. All that you and I need is there. That's where the wisdom and the glory of God are. God wants us to grasp the reality of what He won for us at the cross, so we can enter into the splendor of that inheritance – not tomorrow, but today!

I encourage you to wait, to kneel, and to ask God for the Spirit of wisdom and revelation. Ask Him for a deeper understanding of Jesus Christ bleeding and dying on the cross. We need to see the cross in open display before us and meditate on it, glorying in all the facts of it.

I believe the cross of Jesus Christ has become obscured to the Church today. We need to comprehend the truth of what Jesus accomplished for us on the cross, and receive all that is ours through it.

What Jesus accomplished for us on the cross

For a moment, just imagine that a loving relative left you a million dollars – and sent you a letter to let you know it was in your bank account. All you needed to do was begin writing checks. But because it seemed so unbelievable, you continued to go through life unable to provide for yourself and those you loved – even though you were a millionaire.

Through the cross God has made available this glorious inheritance to us:

- A New Nature. We who were “slaves to sin” (Rom. 6:6) are now “partakers of the divine nature.” (2 Pet.1:3,4) *“The law of the Spirit of life has set me free from the law of sin and death.”* (Rom. 8:2 NAS)
- A New Home – The Kingdom of God. *“God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus.”* (Eph. 2:6 NAS)
- A New Ruler and Lord – Jesus Christ. No longer do we need to be ruled by the flesh and the devil. *“He who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son.”* (Col. 1:13 KJV)
- A New Mind. *“If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”* (2 Cor. 5:17 KJV)
- A New Friend and High Priest. *“I have called you friends,”* Jesus said. (John 15:15) And we are told that as our high priest He *“...always lives to make intercession for (us).”* (Heb. 7:25 NAS)
- A New, Deep, Loving Relationship with Our Heavenly Father. *“I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”* (2 Cor. 6:18 KJV)
- A Comforter and Teacher. *“The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, he shall teach you all things.”* (John 14:26 KJV)
- Victory over Satan. *“[God] disarmed the*

principalities and powers that were ranged against us and made a bold display and public example of them, in triumphing over them...in it [the cross]. (Col. 2:15 AMP)

- Victory over Death. *“...our Savior Christ Jesus, who annulled death and made it of no effect and brought life and immortality [immunity from eternal death] to light through the gospel.”* (2 Tim.1:10 AMP)

- Continual Washing from Sin. *“If we walk in the light...the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.”* (1 John 1:7 NAS)

And so, so much more!

Personal transformation

I’ve personally gone through a true reformation over the past year. You know what happened? The Lord allowed me to begin surveying the cross. And as I have focused my attention there – power, glory, satisfaction, rest, wisdom, understanding, insight, ability, and great grace have poured out of that instrument of death into my life.

The most powerful word in the scriptures is “believe.”

By God’s grace, I am in the midst of an explosive reformation of my thinking. Suddenly Jesus Christ in all of His glory hanging on the center cross has become emblazoned in my understanding. The result is liberating. My chains are gone! In a new dimension I understand the truth and what is true of me. You talk about the tree of life? This is it! Everything flows out of the cross. I glory in it. I’ve been drawing from that artesian well called the cross, and you can too.

Jesus said, *“You will know the truth and the truth will set you free.”* The truth is that Christ died, was buried, was raised, and is alive today. And what is true of Jesus is true of me. I died with Him, but I’m also fully alive with Him.

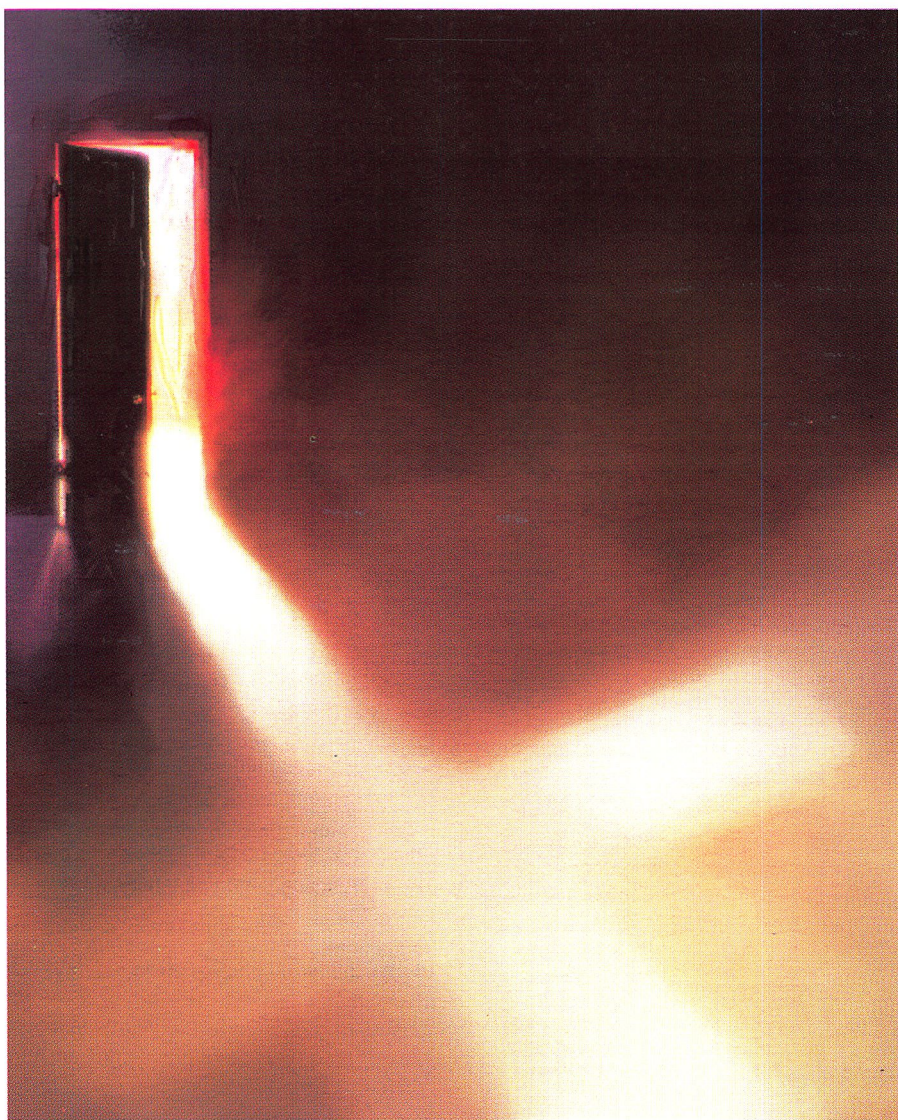
I've entered into a new stage of my life. I'm enjoying the journey. I'm enjoying righteousness. I'm enjoying peace. I'm enjoying the joy of the Holy Spirit each day. I'm no longer waiting to gain enough "maturity" to enter in.

This glorious, transforming inheritance is available to the newest Christian. Simple, childlike believing, the realization that "it already happened,"

is the door of entry into all that's ours through the cross.

Believing is the door

The most powerful word in the scriptures is "believe." John 20:31 says, *"But these things are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that by believing you may have life in His name."* (NIV)



Just as only those who definitely receive Jesus as their Lord and Savior are saved, only those who reckon Christ's death as their own death actually experience crucifixion power over their old nature.

"For in that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He lives, He lives unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. 6:10,11 KJV)

The term "reckon" means literally "to take into account." As Christians we must take into account the fact that we are dead to the power of sin in our life. We are under new management. The presence of sin is not removed, but it is rendered powerless, except by a deliberate act of choosing what we know is wrong. The enemy will resist our "reckoning," but in Christ we have the victory.

Through what God did in Christ on the cross, through the substitutionary, sacrificial, atoning death of Jesus Christ upon the cross, the world is crucified to me and I am crucified to the world.

The last words of Jesus on the cross were, "IT IS FINISHED!"

The Lord is asking us to take our position with Him in His death and resurrection *now*. *"Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him."* (Rom. 6:8 NAS)

It is a spiritual principle that we are transformed positively or negatively by what we focus on. It's time for the Church to focus on the cross. May we be transformed by focusing on, surveying, and glorying in the cross.

A ransom for all

Isaiah 42 paints a graphic picture of the lost. They're like people who are incarcerated in spiritual jails all over the world – kidnapped by the devil with no one to say, "Give them back!"

But we have a message for the lost. It's called the Good News! There *was* Someone who fought for their cause. He

was the only perfectly sinless man who could do it. His name is Jesus Christ. Their prison doors have swung open by the power of the cross. The lost must hear, "Come out! Your pardon was purchased once and for all!"

I want to fully understand the wrath God poured out on His Son. Jesus paid the price so I don't have to! I thank God for the cross and the glorious blood of Jesus Christ. I want to understand the glory of my elder brother and Lord becoming my substitute and dying in my place.

What is our part in all of this? Simply believe. Because of the finished work of the cross, Jesus has empowered me to live in righteousness. Through His blood, His death, and by the power of His resurrection I'm justified. Glory to God! That's where the praise begins and leads to worship!

The more I understand the power of the cross, the more I live day to day in the staggering, sanctifying reality of it.

Glory in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ! This is the way we sow to the Spirit and reap an eternal harvest in heaven and in this life. We have eternity before us. Look, believe, and live in His resurrection life!



Noel Alexander was born and raised in the Republic of South Africa and now serves as a team member of the Metro Vineyard Fellowship in Kansas City, Missouri. Noel is deeply involved in the ministry of intercessory prayer and speaks throughout the world on this subject and others.

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For more information on the Print Production School, from April 8 to July 1, please contact Last Days Ministries, Box 40, Lindale, TX 75771, USA. Phone (903) 963-8671, FAX (903) 882-7709
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Illustration by School of Illustration instructor Bryan Pollard

FINDING
GOD
WHEN
YOU'VE
FAILED

by Jack Hayford



Honesty is indeed a prerequisite to effective prayer. But it can also be cleverly guided on a boomerang path by our arch opponent.

“How can I pray when I know I’ve failed God?” I may ask myself. The awareness of recent sin or even a remote memory can haunt the mind and cripple all confidence in prayer.

Further, I will never feel guilt but that Satan, whom God’s Word labels as the accuser as well as the adversary, will hound my mind with added evidence of my unworthiness and, therefore, of my hopelessness if I do pray.

“You’ve botched it up so badly, how can you seriously expect a hearing from God? You don’t deserve anything. You know it, and He knows it! Forget it!”

Some of us will even press beyond that lying attack to the point of praying something, somehow, but the words – when the mind is bombarded by guilt and condemnation – have a way of falling to the floor. Absent is that sense of the creative power when we speak boldly in simple trust to the God of all the heavens. We feel instead like someone who seeks an audience with the head of state of a nation whose flag we have just trampled.

Fat chance of a favor!

Thin hope of a hearing!

The devil’s right. Forget it.

But wait a minute.

Think clearly for a moment. What suddenly changed Satan’s nature that he would defend God’s glory by urging you to keep your dirty distance?

Nothing.

He's consistently opposed to my union and yours with the Father.

When the devil contests a believer on seemingly righteous grounds you can count on it that there's a trap in the system somewhere. Truth starts to surface. The God of all glory is also the God of all grace.

We need to learn how to handle our biggest obstacle to effective prayer: guilt – the sense of having failed and thereby being disqualified for bold approach.

How can I handle my dirty linen when I want to come to the throne room of the Almighty?

Any correct teaching of God's infinite mercy has a way of sounding to the

God never condemns sinners, and He never condones sin. *"My little children,"* John begins, *"I am writing these things to you that you sin not."* (1 John 2:1)

The message registers, and could produce a guilt feeling just by casual reading... except for the next sentence: *"But if any man sin, we have one pleading our case before the Father – Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is our sin-covering."* (vs. 1-2) In other words, the Word of God says: "Absolutely, do not sin," then turns right around and says, "But when you do..."

Although the heavenly Father does not hold a casual attitude toward sin, He is not shocked by it either. He has made provision for it, not as an invitation to

God never condemns sinners, and He never condones sin. "My little children," John begins, "I am writing these things to you that you sin not." (1 John 2:1)

presumptuous like a license for sin. But we don't enter God's presence by presenting an admission card certifying our sinlessness. Nor does one stamp into the throne room with muddy feet and a glib, "Sorry about that."

A proper balance of humility and boldness is needed. Sin, by whatever description, cannot be skirted. Neither should sin be honored by allowing it to inhibit our praying.

Here's how to handle the problem:

First, understand God's posture. He's on the side of sinners. Jesus' critics puzzled that He was so frequently in the company of people who lacked religious pedigree and moral status: "This man companies with publicans and sinners!" The amazing thing was not only that He was willing to move among the sinful, but that He affected them and not the other way around.

sin, but to receive His freedom from its guilt.

Second, we make a serious mistake if we think God's mercy is the result of some "smile-and-forget-it" bent in His nature. Humanistic theology features the Father as a somewhat doddering, near senile, harmless old man who forgives because He couldn't do much else in His defense anyway. Or it says that God forgives whenever He is asked "simply because it's right and He ought to." It's a part of a gentlemen's agreement: We'll forgive God for letting the world go on in the generally messed-up condition it is, if He will be fair about it and forgive us for those times we've contributed to the mess.

Most people never express such ideas or, for that matter, bother to discover what they do think about forgiveness. But to experience the full peace of

forgiveness we must understand the key to its power.

God's forgiveness is available and adequate because it cost an infinite price: the blood of Jesus.

- Blood is the only price adequate to cover payment for sin. (Heb. 9:22)
- Jesus knew and announced that His death on the cross was that instrument of payment. (Matt. 26:28)
- It was the Father's plan and the Son's agreement to this redeeming event that produced Calvary. (Acts 2:23; Matt. 26:39)

• This message was foretold by the Old Testament prophets and confirmed by the preaching of the New Testament apostles. (Is. 53:4-6; Jn. 1:29; 1 Cor. 15:3, 1 Pet. 1:18,19)

• Both justification (acquittal for our sins) in the present and eternal blessing in the future are granted through the blood. (Rom. 5:9)

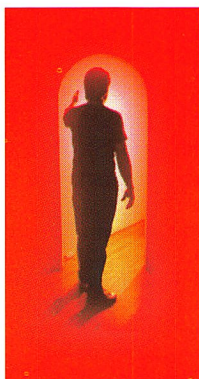
• Therefore, peace of mind and a clear conscience before God are available through the blood. (Eph. 2:13,14; Heb. 9:14)

Forgiveness is abundant, but it isn't the splash of a supermarket display. It's the overflow of the cornucopia of His love designed to prompt our praise and thanksgiving... and our bold approach to His throne, even when we have sinned.

That's the third point:

Handling dirty linen in the throne room is not accomplished by attempting to hide it, but by openly spreading it before God. That's what confession means: acknowledging exactly what we know to be so.

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 Jn. 1:9)



"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." (Heb. 4:16)

"In time of need." That's the time we are most encouraged to come. But when need arises – and is compounded by our own sense of sin and failure – that is the time we're least inclined to come boldly.

But it's the time we're most invited!

Has your desire to pray been blocked by a sense of guilt?

Be done with that blockade!

Let the truth about the blood of Jesus, the truth about the Father's mercy, set you free!

I can come and be cleansed by the miracle of His creative working through the blood:

"Purge me... and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." (Ps. 51:7,10)

Welcome to the throne room of heaven, sinner.



Jack Hayford is the senior pastor of The Church On The Way in Van Nuys, California. To date, he has written 16 books and composed over 400 songs. His media ministry can be heard on over 150 radio stations daily and on national television weekly. More than 60,000 cassette teachings are distributed annually, totaling over one million in circulation.

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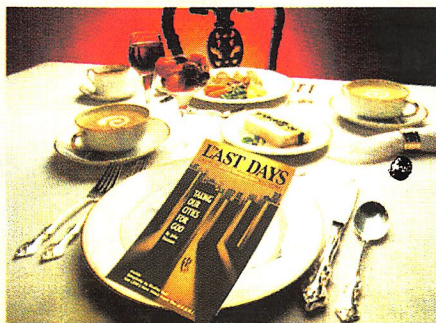
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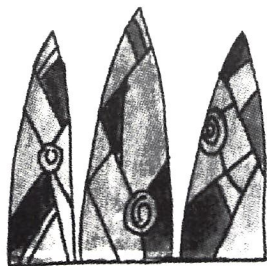
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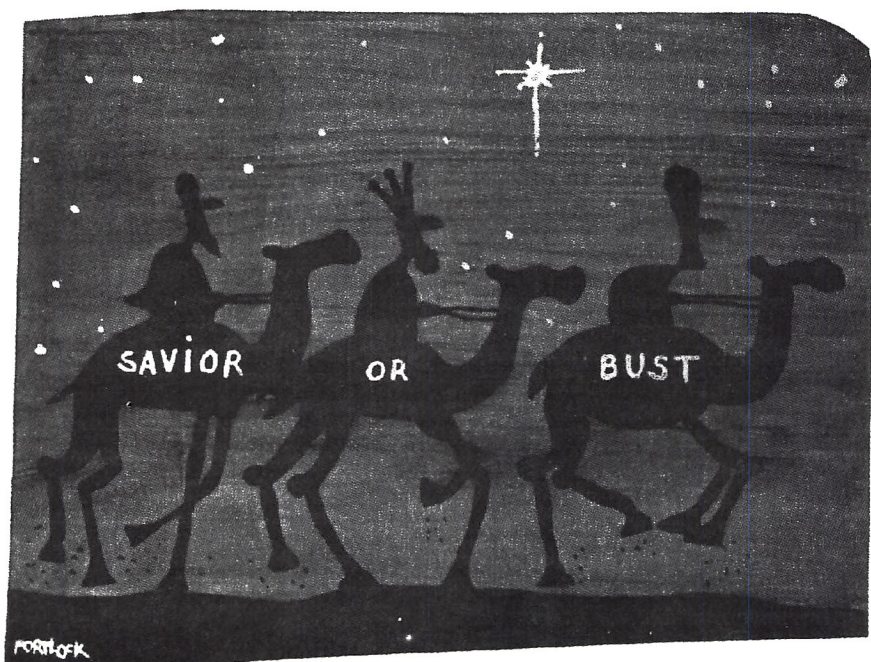
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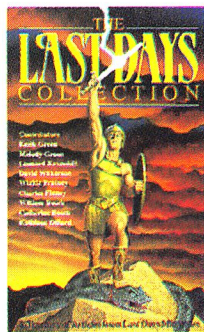
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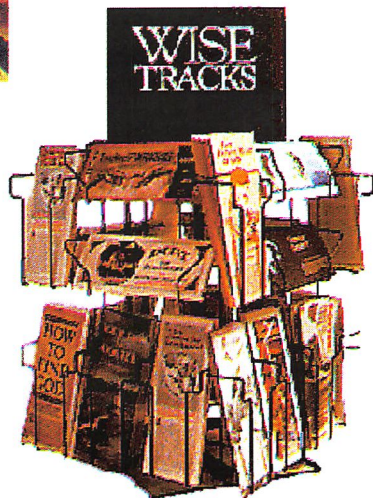
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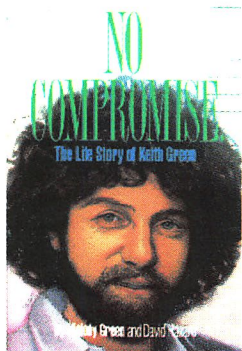
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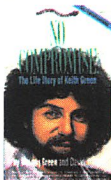
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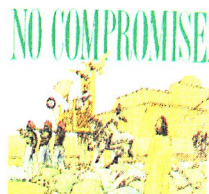
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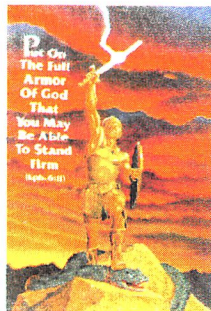
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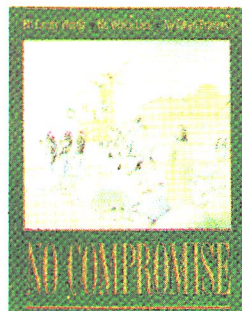
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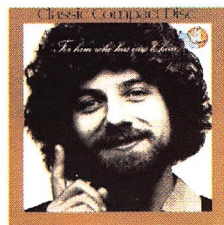
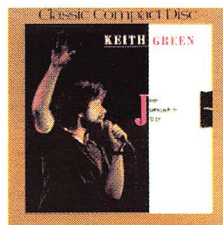
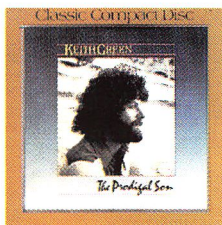
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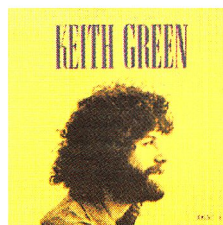
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No Compromise

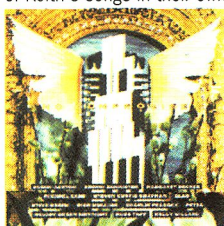
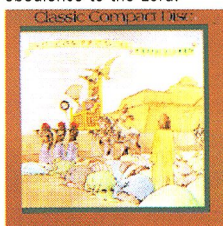
Cassette: \$7 Ref #1021
 Compact Disc \$11 Ref #1022

These songs challenge all believers to live a life of uncompromising obedience to the Lord.

Remembering The Music Of Keith Green

Cassette: \$8 Ref #2031
 Compact Disc: \$12 Ref #2032

13 top Christian artists reinterpret 12 of Keith's songs in their own styles.



**“What a
vast distance
there is between
knowing God
and loving Him!”**

–Blaise Pascal



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